

Martin J. Chávez, Mayor

# City WellNews

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Insurance & Benefits Division

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## Action Items to Help Lower Your Blood Pressure

### 1. Maintain a healthy weight

- Check with your health provider if you need to lose weight.
- If you do, lose weight slowly using a healthy eating plan and engaging in physical activity.

### 2. Be physically active

- Engage in physical activity at least 30 minutes on most days of the week.
- Combine everyday chores with moderate-level sporting activities, such as walking, to achieve your physical activity goals.

### 3. Follow a healthy eating plan

- Set up a healthy eating plan with foods low in saturated fat, total fat, and cholesterol, and high in fruits and vegetables and low fat dairy foods such as the DASH eating plan.
- Write down everything that you eat and drink in a food diary. Note areas that are successful or that need improvement.
- If you are trying to lose weight, choose an eating plan that is lower in calories.

### 4. Reduce sodium in your diet

- Choose foods that are low in salt and other forms of sodium.
- Use spices, garlic and onions to add flavor to your meals without adding more sodium.
- The Recommended Daily Allowance for sodium is 2400 milligrams per day.

### 5. Drink Alcohol only in moderation

- In addition to raising blood pressure, too much alcohol can add unneeded calories to your diet.
- If you drink alcoholic beverages, have only a moderate amount—one drink a day for women, two drinks a day for men.

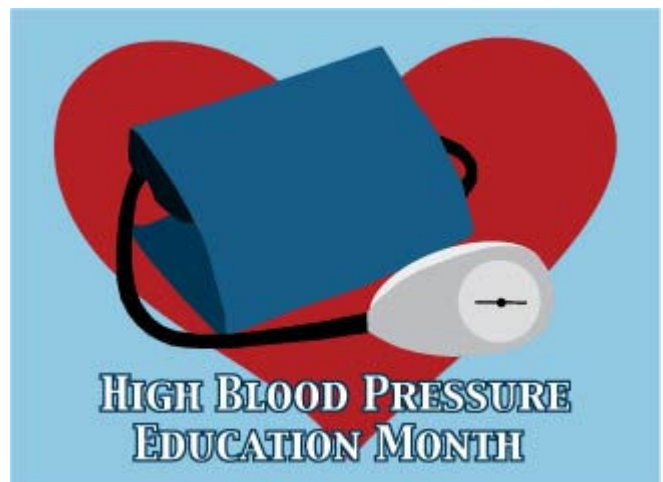
### 6. Take prescribed drugs as directed

- If you need drugs to lower your blood pressure you still must follow the lifestyle changes mentioned above.
- Use notes and other reminders to help you remember to take your drugs. Ask your family to help you with reminder phone calls and messages.

Source: <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/hbp/low/index.htm>

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## Preventing Low Back Pain

Acute low back pain can be emotionally upsetting and physically uncomfortable. It can interfere with normal daily activities, job performance and sleep. Symptoms may include discomfort or pain in your lower back, limited flexibility, inability to stand straight or burning pain or numbness that moves down one leg.

According to the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases' handout on "Health: Back Pain," low back pain affects nearly 80 percent of adults at some time in their life. The pain may come on suddenly or gradually.

Low back pain is considered acute if it lasts for less than a few weeks. Poor muscle tone in the back and abdominal region, muscle tension or spasms, back sprains, ligament or muscle tears, or joint problems are common causes. Sometimes slipped disks can irritate nerves from the spinal cord, causing pain in the buttocks or legs, or numbness, tingling or weakness in the legs.

A visit to your doctor is a good idea if your symptoms are severe, you have pain after a fall or injury, or the problem does not go away within a few days. If, in addition to low back pain, you also have problems controlling your bowel or bladder, or you feel weakness or numbness in your legs, call your doctor immediately.

Following your visit, your doctor may recommend one or a combination of the following:

- Over-the-counter medications to help relieve your symptoms;
- Prescription medications, if your symptoms are more severe;
- Chiropractic therapy; and/or
- Applying hot or cold compresses to the affected area

In addition to discussing these treatment options, be sure to ask your doctor which activities you can do and which you should avoid.

Each person's situation is unique, so work closely with our doctor, and if your low back pain doesn't improve, call him or her again for further evaluation.

[Source: CIGNA HealthCare Well-Being](#)



## May Wellness Tips

### Nutrition Tip

**The benefits of chocolate.** When it comes to chocolate and your health the most important thing is to choose dark chocolate. The darker the chocolate, the richer the flavonoids-which are responsible for most of chocolate's health benefits. When buying dark chocolate look for 70 percent cocoa content and choose ones that are made with "cocoa butter". Remember, even dark chocolate is caloric and just like all foods moderation is key.

### Fitness Tip

**Test your balance.** Stand on one foot with your arms out to the sides. Close your eyes, and count the seconds until you fall off balance. If you are over 40, you should be able to stay balanced for at least 15 seconds, and for 7 seconds if you are over 60. You can practice daily by simply standing on one foot and then on the other foot for as long as possible. You should also engage in weight-bearing exercises at least 2 times a week.

### Health Tip

**"Green" cleaning products.** Almost all home cleaning can be done with white vinegar or baking soda. For example, clean windows with vinegar and crumpled newspaper, or make a paste of baking soda to remove counter stains.

## Did You Know?

By focusing on the physical setup of your workstation and the tools you use, you can reduce your chances of lower back injuries. To improve your workstations:

- Arrange your work so you can sit or stand comfortably in a position that does not put stress on any specific area of your body.
- Keep the workstation and workstation tools within reach without having to lean, bend or twist at the waist frequently.
- Every 10 to 15 minutes, get up out of your chair and stretch your arms, shoulders, back and legs. When you are sitting, shrug and relax your shoulders.

## Fruit of the Month: Lime



### Fruit of the Month: Lime

Limes may be most famous for their historical benefits to sailors. Limes are packed with Vitamin C and were eaten on ships to prevent scurvy, a disease caused by that vitamin deficiency. In the eighteenth century, all British naval ships assigned to long journeys were required to carry limes. The nickname 'limeys' for British sailors has continued to this day.

### Recipe

#### Lime Shrimp Kebabs

Makes 2 servings

Each serving equals 1 cup of fruit or vegetables

#### Ingredients

- 16 large shrimp, uncooked, deveined,
- 3 large limes
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed and peeled
- ¼ tsp black pepper
- 2 tsp olive oil
- 2 Tbsp fresh cilantro, cleaned and chopped
- 10 medium cherry tomatoes, rinsed and dried
- 10 small white-button mushrooms, wiped clean and stems removed

In a glass measuring cup, squeeze limes, yielding 1/4 cup of juice. Add the garlic, pepper, olive oil, and cilantro and stir. Place the shrimp in a medium bowl and pour the cilantro lime marinade over the shrimp. Let the shrimp marinate for 10 to 15 minutes in the refrigerator (do not let them marinate for more than 30 minutes as the acid of the juice will alter the texture of the shrimp). Alternate cherry tomatoes, mushrooms, and shrimp on four skewers. Grill the skewers over a medium heat for 3 to 4 minutes on each side until the shrimp are just cooked through.

Nutritional information per serving: Calories 190, Protein 18g, Fat 7g, Calories from Fat 28%, Cholesterol 85mg, Carbohydrates 20g, Fiber 5g, Sodium 116mg.

#### Source:

<http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/month/limes.html>

## Understanding Allergies

Allergies affect more than 19 million U.S. workers each year. Allergy symptoms, like sneezing, nasal congestion and headache, may make it difficult to concentrate.

There are some simple things you can do to prevent allergies in your home.

- **Dust to control mites**

By dusting surfaces and washing bedding often, you can control the amount of dust mites in your home.

- **Vacuum often**

Although cleaning can sometimes trigger allergic reactions, with dust in the air, vacuuming once or twice a week will reduce the surface dust mites. Wear a mask when doing housework and consider leaving for a few hours after you clean to avoid allergens in the air. You can also make sure your vacuum has an air filter to capture dust.

- **Reduce pet dander**

If you have allergies, you should avoid pets with feathers or fur like birds, dogs and cats. Animal saliva and dead skin, or pet dander, can cause allergic reactions. If you can't bear to part with your pet, you should at least keep it out of the bedroom.

- **Shut out pollen**

When you clean your windows, do you see a film of pollen on the frame or sill? One easy way to prevent pollen from entering your home is to keep windows and doors closed. Use an air filter and clean it regularly or run the air conditioner and change the filter often.

- **Avoid mold spores**

Mold spores grow in moist areas. If you reduce the moisture in the bathroom and kitchen, you will reduce the mold. Fix any leaks inside and outside of your home and clean moldy surfaces. Plants can carry pollen and mold too, so limit the number of houseplants. Dehumidifiers will also help reduce mold.

Source: <http://www.allergyactionplan.com/athome.html>



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### SPECIAL EVENT

PLACE: VINCENT E. GRIEGO COUNCIL CHAMBERS

DATE: 5/6/08 TIME: 11:30 AM & 12:45 PM

CTLL PRESENTATION WITH INSPIRATIONAL SPEAKER **KELLY ADAIR**

### SPECIAL EVENT

PLACE: VINCENT E. GRIEGO COUNCIL CHAMBERS

DATE: 5/20/08 TIME: 12:00 PM – 12:50 PM

LUNCH TIME WELLNESS SEMINAR: **“THE FACTS ON CHOLESTEROL”**

SPEAKER: DR. RICHARD LUEKER

### SPECIAL EVENT

PLACE: HARRY E. KINNEY CIVIC PLAZA

DATE: 5/21/08 TIME: 11:00 AM – 1:30 PM

**Employee Health & Fitness Day**

### SPECIAL EVENT

PLACE: VINCENT E. GRIEGO COUNCIL CHAMBERS

DATE: 6/3/08 TIME: 12:00 PM – 12:50 PM

LUNCH TIME WELLNESS SEMINAR: **“KEEPING A HEALTHY HEART”**

Speaker: Dr. Barry Ramo



## 2008 OPEN ENROLLMENT SCHEDULE

Day/Date	Time	Location
Wed. May 7, 2008	7:00 am – 9:00 am	Southside Water 4201 S. 2 <sup>nd</sup> St. Training Building Plant Side
Wed. May 7, 2008	2:30 pm – 4:30 pm	Solid Waste 4600 Edith NE
Thurs. May 8, 2008	7:30 am – 9:30 am	Pino Yards 5501 Pino NE Gazebo
Fri. May 9, 2008	9:00 am – 4:00 pm	Convention Center Ballroom C West Complex Upper Level
Wed. May 14, 2008	10:00 am – 2:00 pm	Council Chambers One Civic Plaza
Thurs. May 15, 2008	2:00 pm – 4:00 pm	Southside Water 4201 S. 2 <sup>nd</sup> St. Training Building Plant Side
Fri. May 16, 2008	2:00 pm – 4:00 pm	APD Academy 5412 2 <sup>nd</sup> St. NW
Wed. May 21, 2008	7:30 am – 9:30 pm	Pino Yards 5501 Pino NE Gazebo
Wed. May 21, 2008	2:00 pm – 4:00 pm	Aviation 2200 Sunport Blvd. Press Room
Fri. May 23, 2008	7:00 am – 9:00 am	APD Academy 5412 2 <sup>nd</sup> St. NW

**Questions about Insurance & Benefits? Topics you would like us to discuss in City WellNews?**

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